

Griffith Observatory exhibit hunt

Follow six exhibit clues, record your discoveries, and sketch something that makes you curious.

Families and curious explorers ages 8+ | Suggested activity time: 45 minutes

For parents and teachers: Print separately from the student worksheet. These are reference answers, not a score sheet. Accept accurate wording and thoughtful observations. Displays can change; an unavailable exhibit is a valid skip.

1. Foucault Pendulum

This experiment reveals a motion we usually cannot feel. What motion of Earth is the pendulum designed to demonstrate?

Expected answer: Earth's rotation: our planet spins on its axis.

Griffith Observatory: Foucault Pendulum (reviewed 2026-10-29)

<https://griffithobservatory.lacity.gov/exhibits/w-m-keck-foundation-central-rotunda/foucault-pendulum/>

2. Elements

Find hydrogen in the Elements display. What is its atomic number?

Expected answer: 1.

Griffith Observatory: Elements (reviewed 2026-10-29)

<https://griffithobservatory.lacity.gov/exhibits/ahmanson-hall-of-the-sky/elements/>

3. Moon Phases

Read about the Moon's phase cycle. About how many days pass from one New Moon to the next?

Expected answer: About 29.5 days. The 27.3-day orbital period described in the exhibit is a different measurement.

Griffith Observatory: Moon Phases (reviewed 2026-10-29)

<https://griffithobservatory.lacity.gov/exhibits/ahmanson-hall-of-the-sky/moon-phases/>

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Continue exploring. Use exhibit labels and your own observations.

4. Camera Obscura

Read how the Camera Obscura works. Where does the scene projected onto its table come from?

Expected answer: The outside world around the Observatory: views of Los Angeles. Visitors can use the description if the live image is unavailable.

Griffith Observatory: Camera Obscura (reviewed 2026-10-29)
<https://griffithobservatory.lacity.gov/exhibits/wilder-hall-of-the-eye/camera-obscura/>

5. Our Moon

Track down the Moon-rock story. Which Apollo mission collected the rock nicknamed Big Bertha?

Expected answer: Apollo 14. Griffith displays a piece of that rock, not the entire Big Bertha specimen.

Griffith Observatory: Our Moon (reviewed 2026-10-29)
<https://griffithobservatory.lacity.gov/exhibits/edge-of-space/our-moon/>

6. The Big Picture

Use The Big Picture's exhibit descriptions. How do stars look different from distant galaxies in this image?

Expected answer: Stars look like crisp dots; galaxies appear as fuzzy patches. Reading the exhibit descriptions is enough; using a telescope is optional.

Griffith Observatory: The Big Picture (reviewed 2026-10-29)
<https://griffithobservatory.lacity.gov/exhibits/gunther-depths-of-space/the-big-picture/>

Griffith Observatory: Observing Telescopes (reviewed 2026-10-29)
<https://griffithobservatory.lacity.gov/exhibits/edge-of-space/observing-telescopes/>

Sketch / observation challenge: There is no single correct answer. Look for a clear observation and a question connected to the chosen exhibit; a spoken description is welcome.

Keep the activity flexible. Read labels, stay on public routes and follow staff instructions. No answer requires touching a display or entering a closed area.